

Visible Effects of Affirmative Action

An Analysis of Print Media in Brazil

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Introduction

Although, nearly half of Brazil's population identifies itself as nonwhite, media portrays Brazil as being composed of almost all whites. In addition, black and brown men earn half the income of white men. For decades, the government denied allegations of racism and its discussion was avoided.

In 2004, the Brazilian government made a significant move to address racism. University of Brasília was the first federal university in Brazil to enact racial quotas in their admissions policy.

This study focuses on investigating the source of change and public's reaction to the enactment of racial policies. In this study, the race of models chosen by advertisement companies in Brazilian periodicals are a measure of public attitudes.

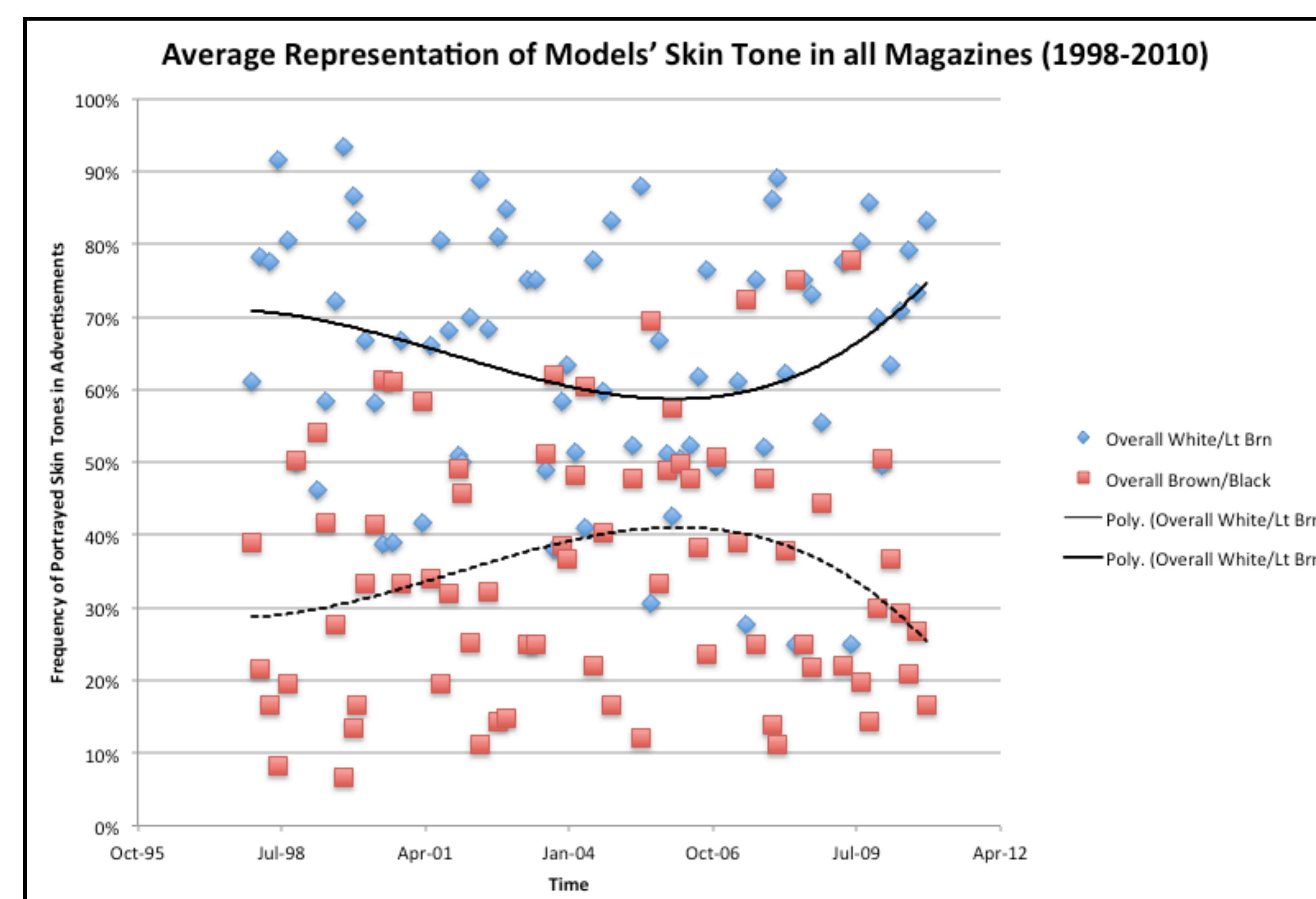
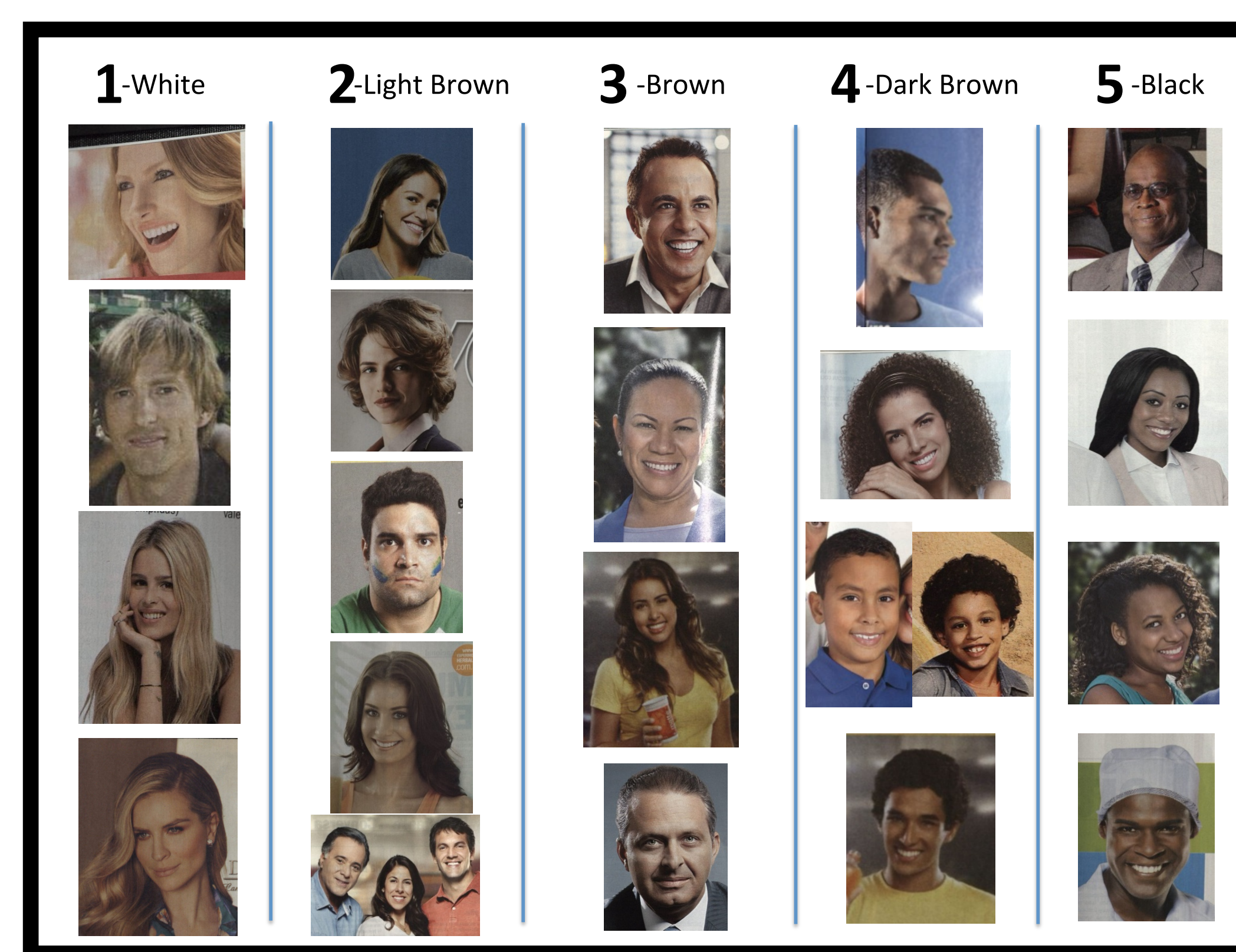
Research Question

Are policy changes the result of attitude changes?
Or are attitude changes the result of policy changes?

Is the affirmative action policy a cause of a shift in the public's attitude regarding Afro-Brazilian inclusion or are the racial quotas a result of changing attitudes to begin with?

Methods

- Advertisements in the first monthly issues of 3 widely read Brazilian magazines (Veja, Istoé, Exame) from year 1998-2010 were evaluated.
- Three advertisements per periodical were randomly chosen.
- A panel of Brazilians ranked each advertisement model's skin color using a scale of 1-5.



Results

The trend lines before 2004-2006 suggest policy change affects public's attitudes while the trend lines post-2004 suggest that public attitudes affect policy change.

- Increase in the representation of non-White Brazilians from 1998-2006.
- Following 2006 and the enactment of affirmative action policies, there is a decline in non-White representation.
- The trends shown in magazine advertisements mirror that of public attitudes, starting with the gradual acceptance of the idea of inclusion of Afro-Brazilians, then leading to the creation of policy, and lastly, resulting in the public's backlash against racial inclusion.

Conclusion

In conclusion, policy change is the cause of attitude shift AND attitude shift is the cause of policy change.

The increase in representation of non-White models from around 2000-2006 is consistent with the government and higher officials taking action to increase awareness of Afro-descendant inclusion.

However, while the decline in non-White representation in advertisements post-2004 signifies a backlash against the government's policies, it also suggests that the public's attitudes are not shaped solely by government policy.

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